What is claimed is:

1. A mobile device having a keyboard, the mobile device comprising:

an input mode selector for determining an active input mode of the keyboard; and

a backlight controller responsive to the active input mode provided by the input mode selector for controlling at least one light source to selectively illuminate an active portion of the keyboard.

2. The mobile device of claim 1, wherein the input mode selector determines the active input mode in response to one of actuation of a toggle key, actuation of a function key and an application executed on the mobile device.

3. The mobile device of claim 1, wherein the active mode determined by the input mode selector is one of a numeric mode, an alphabetic mode, a non-alphabetic mode, a full keyboard mode, a directional mode and a gaming mode.

4. The mobile device of claim 1, wherein the active portion of the keyboard selectively illuminated by the at least one light source is a portion of at least one key on the keyboard.

5. The mobile device of claim 1, wherein the at least one light source includes at least one light emitting diode.

6. The mobile device of claim 5, wherein the at least one light emitting diode is connected to the keyboard by at least one light pipe.

7. The mobile device of claim 1, wherein the active portion is selectively illuminated using a different illumination level than a non-active portion of the keyboard.

8. The mobile device of claim 1, wherein the active portion is selectively illuminated using optical cancellation.

9. The mobile device of claim 1, wherein the active portion is selectively illuminated using a colored light.

10. The mobile device of claim 9, wherein the active portion is selectively illuminated using a different color than a non-active portion of the keyboard.